



MIDLOTHIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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October 11, 2017

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: ET Docket No. 14-165 and GN Docket Nos. 12-268 and 14-166 Via Electronic Filing

Dear Chairman Pai, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner O'Rielly, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Rosenworcel, and Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of Midlothian Middle school, located in Midlothian, VA, that provides approximately 20 performances per year to about 6,000 audience members and education programs to 1300 students, I write with concern about available spectrum and protection for our wireless microphones and backstage communications devices.

We have a very active performing arts program at Midlothian Middle that includes Chorus, Band, Orchestra, and Theatre. Our mission is to provide rich and varied arts experiences for our students, their families, and our community as a whole. Every student in the building participates in at least one of these classes in their three years here. We also have over 200 students in our Drama Club who participate in extracurricular performances and events.

I strongly support the Commission's proposal to expand Part 74 license eligibility to include persons and organizations that can demonstrate the need for professional, high-quality audio and have the capability of providing it through conscientious use of wireless microphones. We support and endorse the Comments filed in these dockets by The Performing Arts Wireless Microphone Working Group.

School theatre programs and professional performing arts organizations hold thousands of performances each year, and wireless microphones are essential to producing high-quality performances while limiting significant public safety concerns. Professional wireless capability, with successful interference protection, is essential to educational theatre, both in the training and safety of students, onstage and backstage.

We often have as many as 12 wireless body microphones running at once during our performances, which is rather high for a middle school! Without wireless microphones we would have an incredibly difficult time ensuring the audience can hear our students as we are in a very old space with limited sound capabilities. The students are also young and still developing their abilities to project fully.

I have gradually upgraded our wireless microphones, but several of them are older units that do not change frequencies. Our department has a limited budget as Drama is the only course at the middle school level in our county which does not charge any fee, so we have to be completely self sustaining. We took a significant hit when we lost the use of several microphones in order to vacate the 700MHz band. Even of the newer ones I have purchased in my 10 years here use a mix of Low UHF and High UHF, and I am concerned that if we lose the use of any of these we will not be able to replace them. This will significantly reduce the quality of our programming. Each year we hire a sound professional from the theatre community to come in and set up our system and train two or more students on how to set up and run the system which ensures we are following guidelines and running everything correctly.

I appreciate that the Commission has sought Public Comment on this very important issue. I ask that the Commission consider the many services arts education programs provide not only to our schools, but to our audiences, local businesses, and community as a whole. I respectfully endorse the Commission's proposal to expand Part 74 LPAS rules to accommodate schools and performing arts organizations that use fewer than 50 wireless microphones. The proposal is a much-needed solution that benefits the arts community and the public as well as the many new and emerging unlicensed white space technologies.

Sincerely,

Taylor Bernard
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